

WORKFARE

what you need to know.

UNEMPLOYED?

DON'T SIGN UP

If you volunteer for job centre "work experience" you can't quit. If you do your benefits can be stopped.

If you are sent on the scheme you have to turn up on the first day – but you can still leave for the first week.

AVOID MANDATORY WORK ACTIVITY

Your advisor may try to refer you to this scheme. They can't do it if:

- You're working (paid or not)
- You're in study or training for a job
- You're already in a scheme or just finished one
- They say it's due to a "lack of recent work experience"
- They say you've not been meeting your jobseeker's agreement



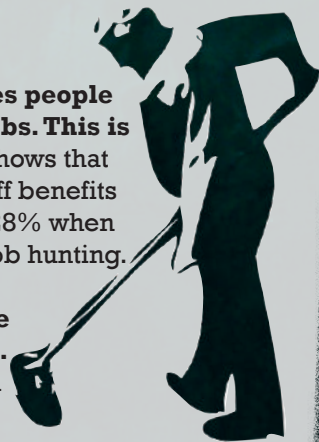
WHAT IT IS

Unemployed people are either asked to volunteer or forced onto one of five government "work experience" schemes, doing unskilled labour for free while companies profit.

THE MYTHS

The government says it teaches people to work and helps them find jobs. This is a lie. The DWP's own research shows that less than 25% of claimants get off benefits through Workfare compared to 28% when people are left to do their own job hunting.

The government says Workfare doesn't undercut existing jobs. This is a lie. Why pay when you can get it for free? Companies are removing overtime and cutting staff because of this scheme. In the case of Holland and Barrett, Solidarity Federation activists who managed to force them out of Workfare estimate they ended up covering the equivalent of 50 full time jobs with JSA claimants before they were stopped.



AND WATCH OUT FOR THE "WORK PROGRAMME"

Firms like A4E and Reed profit from making our lives miserable on the Work Programme. They can make anything they want mandatory – including workfare.

WHY IT'S WRONG

Ministers are not interested in finding people jobs with Workfare, they're interested in punishing Britain's 2.5 million unemployed people and pushing them off benefits. This is all part of their efforts to cut the safety net for normal people and turn cash from it over to their rich backers.

This is why "employment" chief Chris Grayling is ignoring the evidence of his own researchers that Workfare doesn't help us.

And this isn't just about the unemployed – if you're working in anything "unskilled" they're basically expecting you to compete for work with people who aren't earning anything at all.

If we don't all get into the fight against Workfare it will drive down wages and destroy our ability to stand up for ourselves at work.



WORKING?

RESIST ON THE JOB

Argue against it with your co-workers. You need to get them organised – ideally you need to make sure the bosses are losing more than they gain from being on board with the programme. Get your union involved – and us.

Talk to any Workfare people you know as soon as you can. Tell them their rights and suggest bosses should get what they pay for...

BLOW THE WHISTLE

The more information comes out about these companies the more we can shame them and make Workfare a PR nightmare. Get in touch with your local SolFed branch at solfed.org.uk/?q=contact or by post at SolFed, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Be careful not to get caught!

WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN

We're already running boycotts of targeted retailers, launching email and phone campaigns and protesting outside their stores to force them out one by one.

We want to add internal strife to that list by co-ordinating with staff and people on JSA to make Workfare impossible to keep going.

So get in touch and join in!

To find out more, go to
www.solfed.org.uk

